

NORTH DAKOTA STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL
QUARTERLY MEETING via POLYCOM
JANUARY 4, 2013

MEETING MINUTES

Present

Barbara Burghart
Kelly Smeltzer
Jillian Schaible
Donene Feist

Scott Burlingame
Carlotta McCleary
Cheryl Hess
Dave Urlacher

Absent

Marshall Longie
Pat Anderson
Gerry Teevens

VR Staff Present

Russ Cusack
Cheryl Wescott

Robyn Throlson
Helen Baumgartner

Patty Wanner

Guests During Budget and Order of Selection Updates

Nate Aalgaard

Allan Peterson (phone)

Judie Lee

The meeting was called to order, and a quorum was present. There were no additional agenda items.

October 8-9, 2012 Quarterly Meeting Minutes

An amendment was suggested for the October, 2012 SRC meeting minutes to add discussion that CAP also provides training under the topic, *Letter from Protection and Advocacy*.

Action: *A motion was made by Carlotta McCleary and seconded by Donene Feist to approve the October 8-9, 2012 minutes as amended. Motion carried.*

Introductions

Guests included Nate Aalgaard-Director Freedom Resource Center Fargo, Judie Lee - Director IPAT, Deb McDermott CFO-DHS, and Allan Peterson representing North Dakota Association for the Blind.

Budget Update

Deb McDermott, Chief Financial Officer for DHS, shared information related to DHS Optional Adjustment Requests (OARs) for the 2013-2015 biennium.

The Governor's budget proposal for DHS includes:

- **Total budget \$2.8 billion**, which includes \$1.2 billion from the general fund (state funds).
- Adds **\$93.35 million in state general funds for Medicaid** to address the decreased federal funding support (Federal Medical Assistance Percentages or FMAP).
- Includes **\$48.9 million** from the general fund **to maintain other program services** authorized by the 2011 legislature.

- Contains **\$2.1 million** in added general fund resources for community-based mental health and addiction treatment services. This will allow DHS to add bed capacity for the transitional living program, short-term crisis stabilization, and long-term residential programming.
- Provides **4% inflationary increases** each year **for providers** of services at a total cost for the biennium of \$81.3 million (\$40.9 million is general fund).
- **Includes \$2.3 million** (\$1.7 million general fund) for a **mileage differential for qualified service providers** (QSPs) who travel over 20 miles round trip to care for clients.
- Includes a **\$0.50 per hour wage pass-through** to QSPs and for staff of nursing homes, basic care facilities, and developmental disability service providers.
- Adds funding for more in-home supportive services so older adults and people with disabilities can remain in their homes and communities.
- Provides **\$1.2 million** from the general fund for the increased demand for guardianship services.
- Includes **\$3.8 million** (\$3.3 million from the general fund) in temporary cost-of-living increases to help staff living in the Williston, Minot, and Dickinson areas.

The Governor's 2013-15 budget proposes an increase of \$800,000 General Fund for Independent Living. The budget recommendation for IPAT is unchanged in the proposed State budget. No additional State funds are recommended for the Older Blind Program.

The following is a summary of the discussion between the SRC and Ms. McDermott:

- Stakeholder letters received by DHS supporting additional State funding were submitted to the Governor's Office.
- Groups may still advocate for unfunded OARs. The Council may write a letter of support for unfunded employment OARs. DHS shares those letters with OMB and the Governor's Office.
- VR is working on a plan with DHS Fiscal Division to meet the need for Extended Other services.
- Allan Peterson stated that the Association for the Blind will advocate for increased funding for the Older Blind program. The Association would like to see the Older Blind budget increased to \$150,000 per biennium.
- The council is on record supporting benefits planning with its letter to then Congressman Rick Berg.
- The state budget fully matches the federal grant for VR service.
- Scott will ask for volunteers to work on advocating for benefits planners and Extended Other services.

Action: *Russ asked to be kept informed what the volunteers are doing.*

OOS

Russ and Cheryl Wescott traveled to each Human Service Center to dialog with VR staff and providers. VR is now calculating that 485 people will be taken off the wait list in FFY 2013. VR fiscal plan includes \$3.7 million on an annual basis for case services. VR was able to carry forward federal grant funds from FY 2012 of \$1 million. This carryover occurred due to changes in policy and practice particularly related to the increased consumer participation. The carryover of 2012 in federal grant funds will result in VR having \$4.7 million available for client purchases, and VR will use the carryover funds to begin serving individuals currently on the wait list. Expenditures will be monitored on a monthly basis.

The wait list is around 1,100 people. December 17, 2012, 120 individuals on the wait list received a letter saying they could proceed in development of an IPE. Twenty-one of the 120 individuals' case records were closed, as they either expressed disinterest in employment or could not be contacted by mail and phone. VR will reduce the wait list each month by 45 individuals.

Federal regulations require people with most significant disabilities, Category 1, to come off the wait list first (about 400 people). All individuals in Category 1 will be served before others in Category II or III.

There are individuals on the wait list that, while they express a lack of readiness to work, want to have their case with VR to remain in an open status. VR Counselors are starting a dialog with those individuals that work may not be their best option right now.

- Counselors are still providing counseling and service to students and others on the wait list to ensure proper information and referral to community resource.
- Counselors make sure employers are aware of individuals on the wait list who want and need employment and training services.
- Counselors continue outreach efforts to students in secondary education, both in rural and urban school districts.

Ticket to Work

In response to a question about Ticket to Work, VR staff responded that SSA reimbursements are used for VR services. VR has assigned \$244,000 per biennium to fund activities at the four Centers for Independent Living. SSA reimbursement funds are used as well to fund activities related to Older Blind service.

Annual Report

The VR Annual Report goes to the printer next week. We will order 400 copies.

Annual Appeals Report

Cheryl Wescott provided an overview of the process consumers use to appeal decisions made by the VR agency, along with a report of the number and nature of appeals received for FY 2012. Five consumers' appeals were resolved without a formal appeal hearing. One appeal is still pending assignment to a hearing officer. Five additional appeals were

received, and their right to appeal was denied, as the issue they wished to appeal was being on the wait list. A client may request mediation with VR through P&A or the UND Remediation Center.

Evaluation Committee Update

The Evaluation Committee met Wednesday afternoon to look at status 08 clients. Clients closed in status 08 means their cases were closed prior to their being determined eligible, or they were ineligible. The analysis of these closures was made in conjunction with the consumer satisfaction scores for all consumers and those who had their case closed in a status 08. The number of status 08 closures is small, and thus one consumer survey received from this subsection of consumers has a significant impact on the consumer satisfaction score. Cheryl Hess reported that Pat Anderson, Chair of the Evaluation Committee, wants to learn the history of Client Satisfaction surveys and how OOS affects the satisfaction rate. She has asked for more information on standards and indicators, something all Council members could benefit from knowing. VR goal for consumer satisfaction is 80%.

Member Issues

Council membership was discussed. Jillian Schaible will be moved to "Other" on the committee membership list. Don Brunette volunteered to serve on the Ad Hoc Public Relations Committee. Dave Urlacher's second term ends in May, 2013. The next person appointed to the Council should have a disability of some sort in order for the Council to meet RSA's requirement for 51% membership with disabilities. The Council has two Business Representative positions open.

Action: *Scott asked that Business Representative positions be filled by the next Council meeting in April.*

Action: *The next SRC meeting should include time for its committees to meet.*

Scott asked if council members are trained well enough to know what they are doing. Council members should understand and take their roles seriously. This is an advisory council, not a governing council.

Follow-up to P&A Letter Received at the October 2012 SRC Meeting

The letter from P&A raised concerns the SRC was not fully engaged in the discussion regarding VR entering into OOS. In addition, P&A believed VR should not have created a wait list until VRs federal funding source had approved a plan amendment authorizing the VR agency to enter OOS. Russ has since communicated with our liaison at RSA about this concern. RSA's response was that many states enter OOS only to complete the required amendment to the State Plan at a later date. SRC needs to be more involved in OOS decisions, and that involvement is welcomed by the VR agency. In the future, Russ said VR looks forward to serving people in all categories, even while still in OOS.

Scott is looking for a way, or how an Order of Selection will never happen again. Russ responded that VR has a conservative approach in the management of the federal grant. Vickay added that there should have been more discussion with SRC during the OOS process.

SRC agreed to include training during the next meeting using the national training modules developed by RSA.

Action: *Training will be included in every future meeting.*

SCDD Council Grants

Cheryl Hess provided an overview of DD Council grants. The Council has about \$300,000 in grant dollars available. Two of the priorities for these grant dollars could be to fund activities related to Transition and Employment. A Request for Proposals (RFP) will be released this summer. SRC members were asked to think creatively and inform partner agencies about this RFP. A 30% in-kind match is required. The Teacher Internship Project may be one project SRC could re-instate with the assistance of the State Council on Developmental Disabilities.

Grant-Writing Training

Cheryl Hess has scheduled grant-writing training which SRC members may attend:

Dickinson	February 13	1 to 4:30 p.m. MT	BLHSC, Fields Conference Room
Fargo	April 24	8:30 a.m. to noon CT	Location not determined.

Cheryl's phone number is 328-4847.

VR Training Conferences

The VR State Training Conference location will be held in Bismarck at the Ramkota Hotel October 9-11, 2013. SRC will meet the day prior to the State Conference.

2013 SRC Quarterly Meeting Dates

April 18 & 19	Prairie Hills Plaza, Bismarck
July 25 & 26	Prairie Hills Plaza, Bismarck – Combined SRC/SILC meeting
October 8 & 9	Prairie Hills Plaza, Bismarck (Oct. 8) & Ramkota Hotel (Oct. 9) (In conjunction with the VR Training Conference)

Action: *All SRC meetings will include one hour of training and breakout subcommittee meetings. Patty Wanner will coordinate. If Council members have not completed the first four modules in the training series, they should do so before the April meeting.*

A motion was made by Barb Burghart and seconded by Jillian Schaible to adjourn. Motion carried.